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Student Connection



CUYAHOGA VALLEY CAREER CENTER

Mia Ricotta

Independence



Mia Ricotta, a junior at Independence High School, is making strides in her future career through Cuyahoga Valley Career Center's (CVCC) Health Careers program, led by instructor Michael Zana. From a young age, Mia knew she wanted to work in the medical field but wasn't sure which path to take. However, after losing her mother to breast cancer a few years ago, she found her calling—pediatric oncology. "All I want to do is help people, and I love kids," Mia shared. Upon graduating high school, Mia will earn her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification through the Health Careers program. She then plans to pursue a bachelor's or master's degree, keeping her ultimate goal in sight—working in pediatric oncology, whether as a nurse or a doctor.

"Coming to CVCC has completely changed my perspective on school. I'm much more dedicated and focused, and I actually enjoy coming to class," Mia said. "My classmates are amazing, and the learning environment feels like home. I also love collaborating with students from different programs and school districts—it's such a cool experience."

One of Mia's favorite hands-on experiences in class has been using a stethoscope. "Hearing someone's heartbeat is incredible. It really makes you think—wow, that's someone's heart," she said. She also enjoys learning how to take vital signs, measure height and weight, and check temperatures. "It's cool to walk into a doctor's office now and think, 'I know how to do that!'"

Outside of her studies, Mia is a dedicated member of the Independence High School softball team. In her free time, she enjoys playing video games, watching horror movies, and spending time with her family. Her biggest piece of advice? "Don't doubt yourself. You can do it—there's no 'I can't.' You just have to challenge yourself to take the leap. At first, I was unsure about coming to CVCC and enrolling in Health Careers, but I followed my own advice—and I'm so glad I did. A huge thank you to my guidance counselor at Independence for encouraging and helping me through the enrollment process!"

"Mia is a phenomenal student with incredible potential. She perseveres, prioritizes her responsibilities, and approaches everything with maturity. Mia is never afraid to speak up in class, ask questions, or help others when needed." -Mr. Zana

Through it all, Mia credits her family for her motivation and success. "My family is everything to me. I wouldn't be able to do any of this without their support. Shoutout to you, family!" Way to go, Mia! We are so proud of you—keep up the great work!

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